

## Her Couch by MistressYin

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**Summary:**

Steve is starkly reminded of how memories can flood with Just A Word to remind you.

## Her Couch

### Author's Note:

AHHH I'm done!

AND THE PHRASE OF THE DAY IS....HER COUCH!

Steve splayed out on Julie's couch in her new apartment room on campus, grinning up at her.

He couldn't believe his life had changed so drastically in the past year.

-His heartbeat raced at that thought-

The window was open.

-He shivered at the rush of wind that rolled up his spine-

Steve remembered at time when he couldn't breathe. When his world liked meaning and he couldn't focus on a single wisp of thought.

-clarity now sang to him and let him bask in watching her cook and sway her hips-

She threw him a grin.

-"So, I've been hearing some things about a bird named tweeted from your family. I couldn't really help but begin to wonder."-

-And holy shit he referred to them as his family-

Steve laughed at her heartily. "Oh yea, that's a long story. Basically, when I was younger, I ran into a baby version of a creature from the upside down."

She sighed. "I'll never get used to how you call it the upside down. It's a better name than ours, but still."

Steve settled into her pillows. He no longer cringed away from the

awful memories that crept up on him in even the happiest of moments. He met them full on, in a way Will had told him to confront him.

-the carpet was stained with a rustic red, capturing his senses-

On the side table next to him was a clay figure like he and the kids had made.

-her sculpture had beads inside of the clay, nearly starting a fire because, uh plastic in a stove-

It looked fantastic though, and the memory of Jonathon and Nancy screaming as Jim burst into the room like hell was on his heels still made him cackle. Joyce and her anger, however, not so much...

-....-

Steve took a deep breath and lived in the moment, letting his senses take over. He was comfy and it smelled amazing and his eyes were drooping peacefully.

She turned to him and laughed. "I'm...you know, I don't understand what you went through...and I know this is abrupt but...my brother just might be willing to talk to you about some of the things he experienced.

You two need some bonding anyway."

-no, you don't understand-

-“It's a date. I'll have the kids make some tea with all the left over leaves from the used tea bags from my birthday!”-

Steve smiled at her as she huffed abruptly at something he couldn't see.

-“Jeeze, all they ever do is walk the dog! They bark all they time!”-

She pointed blithely to something outside her dirty window. He laughed.

They went on like this, simply basking in each-others company. She frequently cleaned up and washed her hands, leaving no mess even in the shitty room she had. She made it look lived in, though. More than he could say about his house.

“Oh! Hey, did you remember to make that dentist appointment? You have a cavity, Steve.”

He winced.

-“Uh, it evaded me?”-

She gave him a LOOK.

-Water flowed gently down the sink as she washed her hands for what must’ve been the fourth time.-

He rolled his eyes, “Your killing your hands. The oil has to be there for a reason.”

She glared at him. “I’m cleaning them off. You can come cook with raw meat if you want to!”

Steve shrunk back into his pillow. “By the way, how did you do on that test of yours? You never told me.”

-“The test results are still inconclusive. Which means our professors too lazy to check them over properly,”-

Julie worked diligently on cutting carrots into thin slices.

Steve sat up straight, examining her room again.

-On the wall, there was a child like picture framed, on it was a drawing of a boy disappearing in a dark whole and the saying ‘Just walk away!’ written clearly by someone other than the artist as a title.-

He gave her a smile. “Did your draw that?”

“Yea, it was about big bro. All our friends said I had a very creative imagination.” She snorted derisively.

Steve looked at the window, watching someone mow the lawn with great skill. Once you've done the chore, you learn to admire those who can perform it with such ease.

-Grass cuttings flayed around as the blower swept them into a pile-

“SO what's the scoop on Wheeler?”

“What about it?”

-“Uh, you know, how is her husband faring without his dutiful wife?” =

Steve launched into a bit more sugary of a story than was the actual truth of all that had been going down at the wheelers. People had stopped teasing Hargrove for the most part or more like stopped whispering because Hargrove was too scary to be teased. Mrs. Wheeler had a couple flings, nothing special, and had moved into a relatively fine apartment just outside of Hawkins. Mr. Wheeler sold the house and found his own place, but had, to his knowledge, not found another partner yet.

He saw Julie lick the sauce she was making. “I thought the rule was no fingers in the food?”

-“Rules change,”-

-“Hellooo, if anyone knows that, it's me.”-

“Did you just use hello as a comeback? Lucas is starting to rub off on you.”

Steve kicked his feet up on the top of the couch and slid down so his head was on the floor, surprisingly comfortable.

He heard a ring somewhere in the distance.

-“You again,”-

Julie all but snarled it.

“huh?”

“Someone keeps calling me. I picked up both the first and second time and no one was there.”

Steve tilted his head. “Prank?”

Something twisted his gut. They didn’t talk much about the upside down, but hadn’t Joyce said something about Will managing to call her?

-He could still hear the distorted sounds of the demogorgan growling as they rushed past him and Dustin-

-“So, whispers have been flying around about us ‘making it official?’ I got to know, it was someone on your side who started up the talks, wasn’t it?”

Steve squinted. “Most likely.”

-Steve caught a whiff of smoke-

“Do your neighbors smoke?”

“Huh?” She turned away from her food, “Oh yea, their below me so the smell comes up.”

Steve hummed as she became engrossed in her chores once again. She clapped her hands and turned around to him after throwing something else in the oven. Steve thought it was pretty awesome her parents got her an oven installed for her birthday.

“So, how’re you and your mother going?” His ‘official’ (of course they were official) girlfriend questioned conversationally.

“Fine.”

-he knew she detected that something was off about the way he said it-

-“Liar...”-

She accused with a sad little smile on her face.

-“Well, I told her that I have plans this Saturday and she got really upset because she thought I was avoiding her-“

“Which you are.”

Steve glared at her. He dodged away from the conversation by picking up a magazine from off of the coffee table she had.

-I turn the page onto a section about child abuse awareness and plopped it down instantly-

Steve closed his eyes. There was a hundred different reasons she could have that magazine in her house. It was fine.

-“So what it’s the fridge?”-

He asked as she pulled out whatever she left in there for cooling.

Steve, sitting on her couch, couldn’t help but feel content. Nothing was fine, never would be with his luck, but everything was good. Right now he was happy. He closed his eyes and breathed.

Julie gave him a soft, rare smile that held none of the usual mischief.

### **Author’s Note:**

Thanks for the last time from MistressYin!